
MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Kirk Beck, Sally Cernie, Kathye Crumley, Paul Van Doren, Susie Doss, Christina Duran, Albert Figueroa, Shirley Hanagan, Cindy Jensen, Jeff Kraus, Wil Lopez, Taffi Romero, Melvin Ryman, Lorraine Saint, Erin Snyder, Nancy Sturmer, and John E. Williams

Members Excused: Gurumantra Khalsa

Council Members: Rusty Bailey, Mike Gardner, Nancy Hart, and Andy Melendrez, Legislative Assistant Chuck Condor (On Behalf of Chris Mac Arthur),

Guests: Paul Chavez, Brenda Flowers (Mayor’s Office), Anthony Coletta, and Norm Gritton

Staff: Eva Yakutis, Housing & Neighborhoods Manager, Hilda Gonzalez Neighborhood Project Assistant

1. Call to Order/Introductions –

Chairperson Romero called the meeting to order at 6:42 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes for December 3, 2007 –

(Snyder/Crumley/carried)

3. Visiting Councilmembers –

- a. Ward 1 Councilmember Mike Gardner -- Announced that he was available to attend meetings in his ward. A new group in the area is the Grand Neighborhood Alliance.
- b. Ward 2 Councilmember Andy Melendrez -- A couple of new groups in the Eastside: Cridge Street and Langston Street. This brings the number of neighborhood groups in the Eastside up to seven. Many of the neighborhood group members have participated in the Leadership Academy. On December 15, Dwight Street held a Christmas Party with over 200 neighbors coming out to participate. The Eastside Neighborhood Forum also had an end-of-the-year party. Changes were made to the forum. Neighborhood groups were asked to give reports to better network and support each other. The Councilman and the Neighborhood Division is working to empower neighborhood groups in the Eastside. An item of concern is the development by BRE Properties, INC. This housing development is along Howard Avenue across from Lincoln Park. The Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association, 7th Street Historic District Neighborhood Association, and the Eastside Forum have been working with the developer on the housing project. The Chevron gas station on the corner of University and Victoria is planning on remodeling; the developer is meeting with neighborhood associations in the vicinity. Sycamore Canyon Group will be hosting Bob Buster to discuss DHL issues. University Neighborhood Association is looking into parking restrictions in the neighborhood impacted by students from UCR. Phenomenal improvement in Eastside, violent crime has dropped 85 percent. There was an initial concern that the properties

razed along University Avenue would move back the negative element into the neighborhoods. There are three other groups in the Eastside: a business watch group in Canyon Crest, a Chicago and University Group, and a group working with the UNET team. The Canyon Crest group is working with the apartments that offer housing to students in area. The Chicago/ University Avenue group is working on maintaining the apartments in the area. Finally, the last group is working with the UNET team. The team is composed of five members whose focus is on area nightclubs. They work with nightclub owners to encourage responsible ownership and management.

- c. Ward 3 Councilmember Rusty Bailey -- Hot topic in Ward 3 is the Plaza. The Councilman reported that he has received many emails and calls regarding the closing due to the grade separation of Merrill Avenue. There will be future traffic issues in Ward 3 over the next five to ten years. The councilman spoke on new concepts for the Plaza area – ideas include restaurants, retail inside, and closer in proximity to the plaza with parking in the back. Everyone in the community will have a chance to weigh in on plans for the Plaza. Next project in the ward is the Central Avenue retrofit and upgrade – first phase will be from the 215 freeway to Victoria, then Victoria on up to Alessandro. Councilmember Bailey's background is in neighborhoods. His Master's thesis was on building social capital.
- d. Ward 5 Councilmember Representative Chuck Condor -- The councilmember is working with the Castleman Neighborhood group.
- e. Ward 6 Councilmember Nancy Hart -- Councilmember reported on new establishments at Tyler Galleria. The stretch of Arlington Avenue between Van Buren and Tyler is ready for repairs to begin. Great success with the Solander Center located at Bryant Park, thanks to the many good partners such as the scouts, Red Cross, Hispanic Consulate, Hispanic Lawyers, and others. Fitness Center at Bryant Park is about halfway done. The City is working on a new library off Picker and Philbin. A local historian is working on a book about Camp Anza.
- f. Brenda Flowers (Mayor's Office) -- Mayor's Night Out flyers are ready. The first MNO meeting of the year is on January 30, 2008, 6:00pm at Community Settlement House in the Eastside. RNP has been a great supporter of MNO. The Office is excited about what is happening in the Eastside and have analyzed the past year as to where they needed to go for the new year in order to reach neighborhoods that have not had a recent visit.

4. Neighborhood Disaster Preparedness—

Anthony Coletta, Emergency Operations Manager -- The Office of Emergency Management is within the Fire Department. Mr. Coletta provided an overview of how disaster preparedness has become a readiness program dealing with plans, writing them, and training to be ready to implement during disasters.

Statistics: 93 percent of public safety emergencies have a citizen there before public safety agency shows up, so residents must be ready to assist. 100 percent of the time in large natural disasters, citizens give first assistance. The City has a vested interest in having residents ready.

“Ready Riverside” campaign focuses on four audiences: Families, schools, seniors, small businesses. Want people to have a kit and a plan – at home, school, on the road, and workplace; be aware of hazards; get involved in neighborhood preparedness and have neighborhood networks in place.

CERT training – 20-hour emergency preparedness training. Train for self-sufficiency in a disaster, execute recovery, respond appropriately. Program training expanded over the last year.

Ready Riverside website is available with information.

This next year Ready Riverside will include the 20-hour CERT program and other activities but also shorter one-hour presentations to those that don't have a lot of time to dedicate. Community members that want tools to engage neighbors and will have workshops on that.

Questions and answers followed.

“Go Kit”: Important documents, communications plan (important numbers), food and snacks and medication for four days. One should have a kit for home, work, car.

CERT for January may be full. Chairperson encouraged membership to attend the training. Erin suggested a once-a-week class for eight weeks would be good for the RNP and neighborhoods.

5. Concerns from Visiting Neighbors –

Jim Whitelaw: Howard Avenue Neighbors are dealing with street racing issues. The group is also trying to get a stop sign. Other concern is the train tracks which are very loud between Cridge and 14th Streets. Railroads are not responsive to calls of complaint. The group is also trying to get support for a quiet zone. However, the neighborhood is almost 100 percent Hispanic, and they are completely apathetic. Mr. Whitelaw has asked the RNP for help.

Erin Snyder: Asked why do some neighborhoods have the quiet zone automated whistle. Eva was asked to contact Tom Boyd to see what the criteria is and how to expand the quiet zone. In addition if they are any plans for the area along Howard Avenue?

Paul Chavez: Mr. Chavez reported speeding on Esperanza in the Casa Blanca neighborhood. He has met with the city traffic engineer regarding wheel chair ramps installation along street corners.

Cindy Jensen: Cindy reported that Christmas activities in the Wood Streets were successful. Friends and relatives from all over town came by the neighborhood. Eva Yakutis asked if their newsletter be passed out to the RNP for reference.

Christina Duran: Christina reported on the gang injunction on the Eastside. She reports that there is escalating tension in the neighborhood, increase in graffiti, and members from the Crip and Blood gangs are coming in the area. She reports on the community concern that there is no injunction on the black gangs, which is creating an imbalance in a neighborhood.

6. Housing and Neighborhoods Report –

1. Council/Redevelopment Agency Reports – Eva Yakutis reported as to reports that went to council in the previous month
2. Attendance Report – No Report
3. New Neighborhood Groups – Eva Yakutis passed out a listing of new groups that connected with the Housing and Neighborhoods Division over the past two months. This report will be made monthly.
4. RNP board Member reports/activities— Erin Snyder reported that a MNO problem is getting people there. There is no parking or marketing. Mayor's needs to pick better locations with parking. RNP members recognized for attending, particularly Taffi Romero, Susie Doss, and Erin Snyder.
5. Review Draft Letter to Neighborhood Leaders—RNP approved of the revised letter with the addition of the website to it.

7. Goal Setting –
No Report.

8. Subcommittee Reports –

- a) Bylaws Subcommittee—No report
- b) Neighborhood Conference Subcommittee—No report
 - Meeting January 10, 2008
- c) Marketing Subcommittee—Cindy Jensen contacted RCC re: videos. Their agenda is set for the year but willing to let us hire them to do anything.
 - Meeting January 10, 2008
- d) Neighborhood Matching Grant Subcommittee—Susie Doss reported on an application from La Sierra Hills Neighborhood Watch for membership expansion from 117 homes to add 45 homes. They are requesting use of the matching grant for a social event to increase membership. They provided a thorough and complete application. John Brandriff spoke regarding the application, focusing on getting donations in particular. Challenged city council to get tax free number for Neighborhood Watch to increase donations. Paul Van Doren and Christina Duran suggested that a non-profit could be used as a funnel for fundraising. This issue will be a future agenda item. Committee moved for the approval of the application. (Snyder/Duran/Carried)
- e) Neighborhood Awards Subcommittee—No report

9. Future Agenda Items –

- a) CERT Training
- b) Tax ID number

10. Other Items/Public Comment –

Erin Snyder: MNO is in the Eastside in January on the 30th. Christina Duran, Erin Snyder, and possibly Gurumantra Khalsa will attend.

Wil Lopez: WC3 had a holiday party. They are planning to clean the neighborhood street by street starting with Eddistone. They asked the city to drop a dumpster if possible. They would also like to pressure the property owner there to gate off his property to deter the dumping. There are chunks of concrete, etc., that have been dumped there. The location is Eddistone and Crest, Camelot. Hilda Gonzalez, staff for Ward 6, to assist.

Jeff Krause: On January 17, University Village Conference Room, Blakely Center seminar dealing with the pros and cons of paid parking. The event is free, 5:30 to 7:00 pm, refreshments.

11. Next Meeting - February 4, 2008 – Mayor's Ceremonial Room

12. Adjournment – 8:27pm